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DELIVERED BEFORE

THE TWO LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,

BY

HON. ROBERT STRANGE.

JUNE, 1837.

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1837.



ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETIES:

Twenty-two years have passed away, since, on my first visit to these classic shades, I had the honor of being received into one of your Societies.

Since then, busy time hath wrought many changes:—*Many*, did I say? Rather let me speak out the truth, in all its startling force, and declare that NOTHING now remains precisely as I saw it then. It is true, piles of wood, brick and stone are still standing; but even they have been vastly changed, both by improvement and decay. It is true, they occupy the same hill, surrounded by the same vallies, as in former times; but even in these, changes have been wrought, both by Nature and by Art: Here, some luckless tree hath fallen by the axe or the tempest, and its branching honors have crumbled into dust: there, its more favored fellows, protected by Providence, have struck deeper root and stretched forth their tutelary arms.

But such changes as these would scarcely attract the eye of the Philosopher, or touch the heart of the Philanthropist, were they not accompanied by other changes, appealing to the latter with a silent, but affecting eloquence. Where are the bright glances of youth, then sparkling from the seats you now occupy? Where the voices of gladness which echoed through you halls and these ancient groves? And above all, where the young hearts pulsating with health, and happiness, and hope, and confidence? The bright glances of youth yet sparkle from those seats; voices

of gladness yet echo through yon halls and these ancient groves ; and young hearts are here beating with health, and happiness, and hope, and confidence ; and we practise upon ourselves deception from year to year, and, trusting that *semile est idem*, are blind to the changes time is making around us. But sober reflection dissolves the spell, and, touching as with Ithuriel's spear, each separate object, shows us that we have been borne rapidly along the current of a stream, and, deceived by mere resemblance, have thought ourselves stationary, while we are, in truth, at an immeasurable distance from the point of our outset, and have left far behind us objects we fondly imagined were yet lingering upon our right hand, and on our left. When the spell is thus dissolved, with what affecting force does the question address itself to the soul—the friends of my youth, where are they? The answer to this question would open to us a volume of interest and instruction, in the perusal of which, time were not idly spent ; and I can hardly forego the reading from it, here and there, a chapter in your hearing. Doubtless, we should find many a story of disappointed hopes, and now and then, of the breaking of a heart too gentle by nature, and not sufficiently strengthened by education, for the trials of this rugged world ; and we should be told of the grass and wild flowers springing upon early graves, which the hand of misfortune or of vice had hollowed for the dreamless sleepers. Few and far between, we should find the records of successful enterprise, of triumph, of renown, of conquest achieved, while the unfinished story indicates the child of fortune still going on to conquer ; and we should look back with a hardly yielded credulity, to the time when, amid these very scenes, the seeds were planted, now ripening into so rich a harvest ; and did we possess powers to trace more accurately things to their proper causes, we might follow the successive links by which the culture here bestowed is connected with results so widely varying in different subjects. Such is a hasty glance

at the probable contents of one volume, for such is a short summary of human life.

But I must turn from the mingled task of pleasure and of pain its perusal would afford, to the one you have assigned ; and allow me, ere I proceed farther, in most unfeigned sincerity, to express my regret that I have been called upon under circumstances which forbid my refusal, to walk where none but men of renown have trodden before me, and to deprecate the imputation of arrogance in my feeble attempt to follow them; having been actuated by no motive but an unwillingness churlishly to reject the only honor I hope for in the transaction—that of being thought worthy by you to perform the duty.

Your Literary Societies are useful adjuncts to the other means of intellectual improvement here afforded, and the plan of calling annually upon some one of your Honorary Members to deliver an address before you, will, it is hoped, be beneficial to yourselves, and ought to be highly flattering to the individual selected. In responding to this call, it may be reasonably expected, that he who addresses you, will endeavor to mingle instruction with entertainment, and in that view, it is my object on the present occasion, (more obvious topics having been exhausted by my predecessors,) to beguile the passing hour with some reflections on the *Imagination*, as the subject was naturally suggested to me by a retrospect of the lapse of time since my first visit to these scenes. I am conscious of having entered upon a most extensive field, but it is an imaginary field, the whole of which I have no purpose to occupy, but rather to roam through it in freedom, like the butterfly, if I please, idly skimming the surface of its beauties, or if the humour takes me, like the more industrious bee, gathering useful honey from its flowers.

Of the faculty called the *Imagination*, every man supposes he has an intimate knowledge, and would almost feel himself insulted, were one seriously to set about explain-

ing what it is. His indignation would not be altogether groundless, were the effort to impart to him new perceptions of this wonderful faculty ; but he would have little cause to complain of a want of either pleasure or improvement, in submitting to have his attention fixed with a little care upon what is passing, in relation to it within his own mind. Nay, if he would take leisure to himself, and without any assistance from another, reflect a little upon it, he would doubtless come to perceive that he has been satisfied with a very slight conception of what he daily speaks of with great familiarity, and has either reduced Imagination to a province far too narrow for her dimensions, or degraded her to a confused identity with her own ministers. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, is a truth no less applicable to our intellectual than our physical organization ; and no rational being can retire from the contemplation of either the one or the other, unconcerned and uninstructed. Our general notions are usually near the truth of that wonderful organ, the eye, by which the physical world, with all its beauties of form and colour, finds access to our souls ; but it is only when we sit down calmly and reflect upon its singular adaptation to the end for which it was made, the wide range of its action, the solemnness of our condition, and the darkness of our souls, if deprived of its use, that we are overwhelmed with a sense of the almost miraculous gift, and are sufficiently grateful to the being who hath formed it. And he who has never yielded an hour to the consideration of the mental faculty of which we are speaking, is altogether unconscious of a treasure in his own bosom, to which Aladdin's Lamp were a tame comparison, and inexcusably insensible of his obligation to that Providence who placed it there.

Lexicographers define Imagination to be "the power of forming ideal pictures, or of representing things absent to one's self or others." All who have given the slightest attention to metaphysics must have perceived the difficulty

of classifying the various powers of the mind, and assigning to each its peculiar office, and one cannot avoid being struck in the foregoing definition, that Imagination is made to assume among its offices, that of Memory. For in the general power of representing to one's self or others absent things, is clearly included that of calling up the images of things now past, left in their transit, or that faculty of the mind which we are wont to call Memory. Indeed there is strong reason to believe, that the most polished nations among the ancients, either supposed them identical or had no very clear conception of any difference between them. Among those beautiful personifications in the mythology of Greece and Rome, Mnemosyne, which literally signifies *memory*, was personified as a female deriving her descent from Earth as her Mother, and Heaven as her Father, represented as Terra and Celus, and was herself the progenitrix of the nine Muses, in their turn personifying all the liberal arts. This extensive maternity of Mnemosyne is not greater, than in the progress of our remarks, we shall claim for Imagination, and places it as I conceive, beyond a doubt, that in the estimation of those who held the truth of this Mythology, the former was what the latter is with us. This is in fact distinctly recognized by a learned German in his "essay on the reduction of the faculties of the mind," and by other Metaphysicians comparatively modern. What we generally mean in modern Metaphysics by the term Memory, was doubtless included under a general term, represented by one word, Imagination, without any consciousness of necessity for subdivision, or of any recognized difference. This if indeed it be one, was a very natural oversight, for without Memory, (in the signification of that word as understood by us) Imagination could do little or nothing, so very limited is the number of objects which can be presented to the mind through the senses at any one time.—Memory must therefore furnish all or nearly all the ma-

materials for the operations of Imagination, for with all the extraordinary powers it is our design to ascribe to the Imagination, she does not possess that of *creation*, in the proper sense of that word, even in her own ideal world. Doubtless ere the Almighty had formed the Universe, the stupendous plan was originated and sketched out in his limitless mind, although not one atom of which it should be formed, had any actual existence. But the finite mind of man in calling up images of absent things, is confined to such as have been actually presented to her, or the compounds or analysis of things so presented. The most brilliant Imagination with which any finite being has ever been endowed, can do nothing more than make use of the materials with which memory, or the senses, may present her. Dependent then as Imagination is upon Memory for her operations, it is not to be wondered at, that in the infancy of Metaphysical science, no difference should have been recognized between them. But we live in an age, when every day witnesses for man some new intellectual triumph, and the restless mind which has so boldly invaded every other province, has not been inattentive to its own nature, or unobservant of the classification of its own faculties. That class of mental capacities which displays itself in collecting information, is styled sense or Perception ; that class which displays itself in retaining or working up as it were, the materials so collected, is styled the reflective or retentive powers, or Imagination. Sense, it is said, is a kind of transient Imagination, and Imagination, a kind of permanent sense. Imagination is again classified into Imagination proper, Memory and Recollection.—Imagination is that power which brings into active use, by contemplating, combining or analyzing, things present to the senses, or those materials which Memory presents, on what has been so often and so aptly called its tablet. Memory is herself this mental record, and Recollection is that operation of the mind, by which at its

own volition and effort, it turns to some particular portion of that vast heterogeneous record which Memory has made and preserved. Thus, when in that inimitable Poem which holds the first place among those classic treasures you are destined to bear with you from the bosom of your Alma Mater, the ancient Scian represents the Gods as descending from Mount Olympus, and mingling in strife with mortals on the plains of Ilium, Imagination was the faculty which sketched the picture on the mental trestle, by grouping the constituent ideas furnished from the Memory of the sightless bard—and recollection was the effort by which each appropriate circumstance was called up from the promiscuous stores of Memory. Every man possesses these faculties in a greater or less degree, and in their absence, would probably be little superior to the brutes that perish; for without these properties, Reason, that peculiar badge of human dignity, would enjoy but few opportunities of signalizing his presence. The Imagination then, you will perceive, is the *primum mobile* of intellectual activity—the main-spring of this wonderful machine, the human mind. But it is not my purpose to hold you down to a dry metaphysical disquisition, invading the province of Locke, of Bacon, of Berkely, of Reid, of Stewart, of Brown, and of Abercrombie; yet it was necessary for me to say thus much, and it would be foreign to my object to say more, in ascertainment of what Imagination is. The attempt to define her more accurately would perhaps be neither very useful, nor altogether successful. We shall best and most agreeably learn something of her nature, by contemplating some portions of her works; and so varied and beautiful are they in themselves, that the most unskilful guide cannot fail of affording entertainment in conducting us among them.

The Heathen Goddess Mnemosyne, as we have already had occasion to remark, was the parent of nine lovely daughters, called the Muses, personifying all the liberal Arts and Sciences known among the most enlightened of

the Pagan nations. But when Imagination suggested to the worshippers of herself personified as Mnemosyne, this typical indication of her prolific quality, she modestly withheld more than half her progeny, and defrauded herself of many of the fairest regions of her magnificent empire.—When the sands have been counted on the sea-shore, and the stars have been numbered in the Heavens, then may the offspring of Imagination be told ; then may be marked out the limits of her empire. A beautiful writer has remarked that “ the influence of the Imagination on the conduct of life, is one of the most important points of moral philosophy. It were easy by induction of facts, to prove that the Imagination directs almost all the passions and mixes with almost every circumstance of action or pleasure.”—And it may be added that both Hope and Memory are her handmaids, as without her, the past would be an obliterated record, and the future a dark, illegible scroll, while the present would be a dull, uninteresting mass, a plain without a pillar, a dead sea, without one wave to break its monotony. All the other intellectual powers would droop into inactivity, and become useless to their possessor. The lungs inhaling vitality from the air “ which clips us round about,” is not more essential to the performance of animal functions, than is the Imagination to the exercise of the intellectual. In partial illustration of this position, let us borrow for a moment her fairy wings, and fly with *Alexander Selkirk* to the Island of Juan Fernandez. Let us take her wand also, and each one transform himself to that *Robinson Crusoe*, whose story, in many a youthful hour, has lent to time a swifter wing, and robbed even sleep of his wonted allowance. We emerge dripping from the briny Ocean, and cast a disconsolate look upon the Island before us, unblessed with a single indication of human residence. We turn again, with despairing countenances, to the Ocean behind, and its waves are still leaping successively onwards to the land, as if in pursuit, ever chafing their angry crests, and

hoarsely murmuring their triumph and defiance. Tossing amid their foam, in baffled efforts for self-preservation, and occasionally sending forth a cry of agony, we, here and there, descry a companion, who but yesterday was weaving in joy the web of fancy, and sketching out vast plans of happiness when his present voyage should have been successfully accomplished. Behold! he sinks, to make his everlasting resting-place among the beds of coral. The intensity of our interest in our own uncertain and cheerless prospects, scarcely leave room in the bosom for one throb of compassion towards our struggling shipmates, or time for the tear-drop of regret to gather for those that have perished. Self-interest directs our notice to the gallant bark which had been our home for many weeks upon the trackless waters, as it seems to struggle, like a thing of life, to escape from the sand bar on which fate has precipitated and fixed it for destruction. Feelings of tenderness gather towards it, as though it were really a sentient being, and prayers would ascend to heaven for its deliverance, did not hope refuse to lend them wings in the overwhelming conviction of her irremediable destiny. Despair at length prostrates us to earth, and nature finds relief for the fatigued body and the harrassed mind, in the unconsciousness of sleep. But sleep is limited in its duration, and in process of time, consciousness returns, and with it an imperious demand for bodily sustenance. In every animal, there is an instinctive impulse to satisfy this craving, when nature presents the means; but where she withholds them, or leaves them to be attained by other than the simplest exertion, nothing remains, but to perish by the most lingering and distressing of deaths, to those beings who are furnished with instinct only. Upon the desolate shore we have described, no ready means of supplying the cravings of appetite would probably be found; and what then must be our fate, in our present destitution? Memory, by that wonderful principle of association which contributes so

much to her usefulness, naturally presents her record of the wholesome and delicious viands which prudent foresight had treasured up in that vessel we last saw, ere slumber overcame us, struggling with the winds and waves upon the tenacious sand-bar. Yet what avails this act of officious Memory, but to give a keener edge to appetite, and increase ten fold the agony of our despair? Cruel indeed would be this office of Memory, were it not that Imagination is already awake, and pluming her wings for a flight of discovery over the lonely Island, the restless waters, and even towards the overhanging heavens, for something which may avail in the hour of extremity. The suggestion of Memory directs her towards the vessel now resting quietly upon her sanded bed, the storm being overpast, and the winds having ceased to toss her, and the angry waves to beat against her sides. Thither Imagination wings her way, and bears back a copy of the whole interior of the deserted cabin, in a moment of time, more faithful than the most accomplished painter could have executed in weeks of laborious application. On the table she exhibits the ready drest joint, sending up its savoury steams, and pouring out its luscious juices—she puts a knife into the hand of the hungry man, and bids him carve to his liking, while, at the same time, she kindly presents the wholesome bread, and pours from the flagon the refreshing beverage, to give to his repast a more perfect zest. Having thus stimulated him to the most complete willingness for exertion, she does not desert him, but kindly points to the spars and plank scattered upon the beach—melancholy vestiges of the recent shipwreck. She suggests that by stripping portions of bark from the surrounding trees, those planks and spars may be so fastened together, as to form a raft, on which he may pass over to the vessel and secure a portion of her contents, not only as a relief from present starvation, but to furnish him with comparative comfort during his uncertain stay upon the lonesome Island. Another faculty,

which, but for Imagination, would have been altogether useless in this season of distress, now begins to stir himself and to give heed to her suggestions, and upon his fiat it will depend, whether the ocean shall be robbed of any portion of her booty, or Imagination must go forth again in search of some other means of deliverance. This faculty, you will perceive at once, is Reason, judgment, or understanding. With alacrity, yet with deference, Imagination, as if desirous that this stern faculty shall decide correctly, presents for his consideration a variety of supposed cases on each side of the question. She again applies to Memory, and obtains from her the records experience has made upon her tablet in similar cases, and presents them to Reason, that he may the better determine of the future by things that are past. After deliberately considering all the suggestions of Imagination, reason decides the hazards to be incurred by the enterprize are justified by the probable result and the urgent necessity, and bread is snatched for the famishing from the bosom of the waters. Here then in one of the most primitive conditions of human life, by the works of Imagination, we learn in part what she is and something of her inestimable utility. I say one of the most *primitive* conditions, for in truth, as an animal, the first want of man upon earth is bread to sustain his body and make glad his heart, and to provide it for himself, is a necessity imposed on him by an irreversible decree, although he may not always have the consciousness of this law upon him. It is not the lot of every one to be cast upon a desert island, but in whatever situation he may be placed, provision for his bodily wants is not only essential to his comfort, but to his very earthly existence. Imagination must suggest the means of obtaining these supplies, or of improving such as Providence may cast in his way. We might follow De Foe in the fancy sketch he has given us of the adventures of the person whose name we have recently mentioned, and shew how Imagination assisted

him out of difficulties the most trying, and brought him comfort out of prospects the most discouraging, and how, upon the mere discovery of a single human track upon the sand, she changed the whole current of his thoughts, peopled his own and the surrounding islands with the children of Adam, and suggested to him precautions, without which, he would in all probability have become the prey of cannibals. But it was our purpose only to use him for a single illustration, and leaving him, as he has so often done heretofore, to imp the wings of infant Imagination with a healthful vigor, we proceed with our subject.

In a state of nature, man finds his frame shivering amid the snows of winter, while he bides, a houseless wanderer, the peltings of the pitiless storm, and sees those dearer to him than his own flesh shrinking from the blast and uttering piteous lamentations as the cold increases in intensity. Some beast passes by him wearing the thick and shaggy covering with which nature has provided it, and Imagination whispers "it was not for itself alone that this was given." She proceeds to suggest the means by which it may be torn from the natural possessor, and become at once the ornament and defence of him, whom she does not fail to inform him is the lord of the Creation. In a bolder record, Imagination points to the trees of the forest, and demands "for what were they planted by an invisible hand?" She, who asks the question, furnishes an answer, which is approved by Reason. She presents a tree prostrated and robbed of its branches—another, and another, in continued succession. In imaginary toil, they are rolled together and piled one upon another, until a rude cottage is formed sufficient for the protection of its tenant from the inclement seasons, and from the unceremonious and fatal visits of the nightly prowler. Imagination suggests the means of converting this ideal picture into a comfortable reality, and it is done. As the industry of man supplies one of his wants, from the thick phalanx behind another comes forward, and

occupies the place of prominence. It is no sooner there, than busy Imagination sets about devising schemes for its removal. She may suggest many, only to be rejected by Reason, but is certain to persevere until his approving nod proclaims for her another triumph. Urged on and assisted by Imagination, man first supplies all his pressing necessities and then comfort after comfort thickens around the happy being. Not content with having snatched for him the simplest food from the hand of nature—with having robbed the beasts of their skins to supply him with cloathing, and deprived the forests of their glory, to furnish him with habitations—Imagination conducts him through a labyrinth of culinary mysteries, until nature's gifts are so disguised as to defy recognition, and the simple food of earth is made to rival the Ambrosia of the fabled Heavens. The primitive cloathing is thrown aside, and the loom is made to supply textures of every variety, over which colours are cast more numerous than those giving glory to the rainbow, among which the gold and the precious stones mingle their lustre. The humble huts are forsaken, and the Genius of Architecture is called into being, to whom Imagination presents models both for ornament and utility in her complicated work, borrowed from all earth and ocean; and even the fantastic images formed by the clouds, as they float through the atmosphere or bask in the evening sun, fail not to furnish hints for the outward finish of some pompous castle, or the gorgeous drapery adorning the interior. But like other conquerors, her unsated ambition yet seeks for other regions wherein to erect her standard, and one conquest but opens to her the view of other lands, of which she covets the possession. Records fail to inform us which were first in the order of time; the achievements of Imagination amid the starry Heavens, or those upon the boundless waters; but, in both instances, they have been wonderful beyond expression. We have learnt by them, that this earth is not a plain indefinite in-

extent, resting upon pillars as baseless as their own existence, but *one* of orbs innumerable

“Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,”

borrowing light and warmth from the sun, that exhaustless fountain of comfort and splendour, but how itself replenished, it is reserved for Imagination to discover in some flight yet bolder than any she has taken. Early, very early in the history of man, she borrowed for him the wings of the wind, and sent him careering over the great deep, in search of wealth, and fame, and knowledge. He has traversed upon them the globe, and taken the circuit of every land. Perhaps it was as early that she sat the eye of the astronomer “in a fine phrenzy rolling from earth to heaven,” transported him in contemplation to the milky-way and taught him to walk among the stars of the firmament, and to know how the sweet influences of Orion and the Pleiades were bound. If the untutored Imagination can take such wild delight in soaring uncontrolled amid the wonders of yon Cerulean canopy, what ecstatic glory must have filled the soul of Copernicus and Newton, when, with the confidence which knowledge only gives, they strode with unerring footstep from planet to planet, and with visions purged from the films of ignorance, looked abroad from some commanding point upon the Universe beneath them, moving obedient to laws they had learned to comprehend. It is doubtful whether the first use of language can be ranked among the triumphs of the Imagination, but it is certain, that as language exists among us, it is more largely her debtor than it would be possible to express in the compass of any essay of reasonable length. To her is due the merit of symbolic language or letters; but what age or country witnessed her first efforts no certain information can now be had. Whether the Pyramid, or Obelisk, on Egypt’s ancient Delta, still perpetuates the earliest of her successes, or we must go back in search of them to the plains of Chaldea, where every thing is vocal with the

story of past generations, or to Phenicia the birth-place of Cadmus, and bear with that hero to other lands, the wonderful discovery, is perhaps of little moment; yet so important has the act itself been deemed, that the Christian and the Heathen have often united in ascribing to it no origin inferior to direct revelation from Heaven. But, in times comparatively modern, Imagination has added incalculable extent to this field of conquest. The art of printing has furnished an intellectual jubilee in the history of our race, and thrown down many of the barriers which impeded the onward march of the insatiable victor, whose glories we are celebrating. She now occupies a vantage ground, from which a boundless horizon stretches out on every hand. Comparatively recent as this discovery is, who shall point out the instrument by whom it was effected? Who shall declare what brain Imagination made her hall of State, while engaged in its developement? Rumour tells us, that after having given birth to the secret in the mind of some cunning and selfish mortal, she was compelled to resort to the dishonest cupidity of one of his own servants to scatter the blessing to the world at large. But it is due to Germany, to acknowledge that this is one of the operations of genius within her borders, that it constitutes a part of the large amount for which mankind is her debtor. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are singularly remarkable for the achievements of Imagination, and among the rest, is that signal one, the discovery of a new world, to which we owe our existence as a nation, with the numberless individual advantages springing out of it.—She bore to the mind of Christopher Columbus a representation of the beautiful land we inhabit, with its vast extent, its varieties of soil and climate, its lofty mountains, and its noble streams, and Reason decided that the vast amount of matter on the side of the globe then known to mankind, required an equipoise, and the mind of the sagacious Genoese was thus convinced, that a transatlantic continent

was no "baseless fabric of a vision," having existence nowhere but in his own seething brain. In latter times, she has chosen this new found continent as a favorite scene for her most useful operations. Here, she erected bowers for Liberty, and hither, she invited her to come and make her everlasting home. Here, government has been made to assume new attributes, to combine rational equality with the most perfect submission in each member to the control of the community. But public virtue must direct the movements of this new and beautiful machine, or destruction awaits it. May a merciful Heaven continue to us this guardian angel, under which we have so far prospered! Imagination sickens and refuses to contemplate what must follow her departure. A ruin must ensue, dreadful as that when sin devastated the primeval joys of Paradise. Should it occur in our day, like our first Parents we will look back upon our present condition, but with a regret even more embittered than theirs; for although

They looking back * * * * * beheld
The Paradise so late their happy seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms;

Yet

The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.

To us no other world of earthly hope were left, but, chained to the scene which our folly had converted to a place of misery, ten fold aggravated by the blessedness we had cast away, no consideration would be left us, but, from day to day, to repeat the

"Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum magna pars fui— * * *
Quanquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit."

But my feelings warn me of the exhaustless theme I am now broaching—too deeply interesting for the present occasion—too engrossing, perhaps, to the heart of every American. Imagination leaves it with reluctance, re-

membering that from this Continent it was, she mounted the chariot of the storm, and plucked from it the treasured lightning, and submitted it to the examination of a Philosopher, and suggested its nature and some of the great purposes for which it was created. From hence she sported over the deep, and looked upon the wind-stirred vessels, as she left them behind in her rapid flight, and, in a moment of inspiration, catching from the Ocean's bosom the vapor as it ascended, confined it in iron prisons, and gave by its expansive force, an impulse swift as her own wings, to palaces she formed, wherein man might navigate the waters. Proud of her achievements on the Ocean, she turned to the land, and the hills bowed themselves, and the valleys rose to meet her approaching footsteps, and a level way was formed over which her subjects are allowed to pass in cars apparently self-moved, and rivalling in speed "the sightless carriers of the air." These inventions have been figuratively denominated an annihilation of space.—But credulity is staggered by an alleged substraction from the inconveniences of space, still more recent, being the communication of information thousands of miles in a few minutes of time, with perfect accuracy and little expense. In this hasty view of some of the more important operations of Imagination, chiefly in the range of Physics, all of us, I suppose, are satisfied that much injustice is done to this noble faculty by the looseness with which we are wont to speak of it—that she is, in fact, with the assistance of Reason, the inventive faculty—that he who experiences most of her influence, in general possesses most of that quality which men call genius. It is not intended to deny to other powers of the mind their respective offices and utility in all these important works, but only to assert for Imagination a most active agency in their accomplishment; that she gives impulse to the rest, and presents the drawings from whence they copy, or at least furnishes the constituents of what is put together by sterner faculties. There

is a certain practical tact, by which many men avail themselves of the genius and labor of others who have themselves very little of the Divine afflatus of Imagination. Such men monopolize, so far as this world is concerned, most of the substantial rewards of genius, by means of cunning and other inferior qualities of the mind, accompanied by a selfishness of disposition, which holds on with the tenacity of death to any adventitious advantages they may acquire. With an ingratitude, not at all remarkable when we fully understand the ground they occupy, these men are apt to be habitual denouncers of men of genius, denying to them the attribute of common sense, and speaking of common sense and genius as rarely inhabiting together, and being, in fact, directly opposed to each other. By dint of repetition, these opinions have become but too common in the world, and have contributed much to the advancement of impudent dullness to places of distinction, and putting down genius, and rendering more thorny its path, which diffidence and sensibility, and the want of arrogance and selfishness, render enough so by nature. To give greater effect to these errors, the empire of Imagination has been divided, and one half taken from her and assigned to Common Sense, as it is called, while the other is left to herself, to roam over and play fantastic tricks in, at her own pleasure, to the scorn of these idolators of common sense. Nothing can be more unjust than this partition, as thereby, as I trust we have seen, Imagination is grossly defrauded of her honest claims, and opportunity afforded to dullness to pass herself off for common sense. "A man of common sense," says Helvetius, "is a one in whose character indolence predominates; he is not endowed with that activity of soul, which, in high stations, leads great minds to discover new springs by which they may set the world in motion, or to sow those seeds, from the growth of which they are enabled to produce future events." But says another great writer, "in conducting the low and petty

affairs of life, common sense is certainly a more useful quality than even genius itself;" and yet another has said, "that best sort of sense is common sense," implying, in all situations. Now I will venture to suppose that these apparent differences are the result of some disagreement in the use of terms, and that different ideas are represented by the term common sense, which I take to be in truth, that happy combination of Reason and Imagination, which constitutes the perfection of the human intellect, and gives it power, like the trunk of the Elephant, over subjects the most important, and at the same time over the most trivial. For where there is exhibited too much of the *fire* of Imagination, as it is called, in happy illustration both of its brilliancy and its proneness to mischievous uses, Reason is feeble by nature, or laboring under some temporary suspension of his powers; and where this fire is a scarcely perceptible spark, Reason possesses neither warmth nor light sufficient for any useful or interesting exhibition of his powers. The total absence of this fire is the characteristic of absolute dullness, and as she is cut off from all pretension to genius, she consoles herself by affecting a relationship to common sense; unconscious that it is only the same being under more advantageous circumstances. We have hitherto confined our attention to the portion of Imagination's works, lying within that part of her Empire which has been erroneously assigned to common sense exclusively, embracing what are commonly called the Arts and Sciences. What have been called the fine Arts, are, as erroneously, given up to the sole dominion of the Fancy or Imagination. In them there can be no false play—no successful appropriation of the works of others—no room for artifice and cunning to pretend the accomplishment of what has not been done. In this field, dullness is certain to shew his true character, to be foiled and detected, and therefore he is ever prone to underrate what he can never hope to attain. But in spite of his envy, from this region

it is that man, as an intellectual creature, must draw the chief of his enjoyments; otherwise, one dark night of stupidity must brood over his soul, excluding alike the perception of moral truth, and every order of beauty. But with him, who enjoys even a crepuscular ray from the regions of Imagination, feelings of pleasure are stirred in his soul more exquisite and unalloyed, than any thing else can afford, finite in its nature, whether in contemplating the pictures of his own fancy, or her more masterly portraiture from the bosom of others. But to him, who possesses in himself a vivid, yet properly regulated Imagination, the Philosopher's stone with the Elixir of Life were an idle gift, with any view to the actual increase of his temporal happiness. Any great endowment of this nature usually manifests itself, by giving to its airy creations "a local habitation, and a name." By pouring them out in poetic effusions, like Homer and Milton, by transferring them to the canvass like Apelles, and Titian, and Rubens, and West, or to the cartoon like Raphael, causing them to leap forth from the solid marble like Phidias, and Praxiteles, and Michael Angelo, and Canova; or stirring the hearts of men by strains of eloquence, as Demosthenes and Cicero, and Pitt and Pinckney; or subduing by the power of music, like Orpheus, and Arion, and St. Cecilia, and Handel, and Paganini. But these are mere exhibitions of genius; they are not genius itself, and the pleasure derived from success in these displays, is of a character altogether different from that which is produced by the procreation, as it were, of these children of the mind, no way dependent upon the labor or reward of bringing them forth. It is certainly true that genius is vastly improved, like most other things, by exercise, and no excuse can well be offered for him who buries this precious talent in his own bosom, making no displays of its power, nor rendering it useful and agreeable to others. Yet it may cheer with its light the bosom it inhabits, while it shines through but faintly

to the world around. And even where the supply is too sparing to claim the name of genius, Imagination has furnished every human bosom with a treasury of delight.— But let us for a moment survey this fairy land assigned to Imagination, and look upon some of the objects it contains. In vain do we seek for words to describe the wonders we behold. Images crowd upon our souls in thick succession, passing more rapidly than the shadows of Banquo's progeny before the envious Macbeth. While they glide before us, Reason holds an unsteady seat, and is borne along with them as if placed above some rapid current, and can scarcely persuade himself it is not all a substantial reality. The air is redolent with all delicious odours; there is a luxurious softness in the breeze, which gently curls the stream, as it glides along, and agitates the tree tops and variegated bowers, where all forms of beauty are mingled in attitudes of grace; while a resplendent rainbow, spanning the domain, pours down a lustrous shower upon all beneath it. Yet it is not every thing that is thus enchanting in Fancy's empire; it is variegated, and there are pictures of gloom and of sorrow, as well as of brightness and of joy; and these pictures are charged with human beings in every predicament of earthly passion. But our business now is with those who are the *pensioners* of Imagination. Surely a general view of her realm is sufficient to touch the feelings of every heart, which is not as insensible as the nether millstone. But there is something in the constitution of those hearts, disposing them to lend their sympathies fully to individuals, and not to masses. The joys and sorrows of multitudes are strange to them, and it is only by the contemplation of individuals, that we can "rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep." When Sterne would paint with effect the horrors of slavery, he takes a single captive, and places him before us, an isolated picture. In like manner, fully to enter into the gratification this faculty affords to one

under its influence, we must take particular cases, and, difficult as it may be, choose from the multitudes which crowd upon our minds. Let our first be like Sterne's, a captive. The cheerless walls of a prison surround him; he is shut out from the light of heaven, and the days of his life have been numbered, even to his own ear. The sword of justice is suspended above him, as if by a single hair; for he hath been tried, convicted, and sentenced to execution.— Yet he does not sit in terror, like Damocles, although the hour is at hand when the sword must certainly fall, for this is the last night of his earthly existence. He is more than composed—in his countenance, there is an expression even of dignified pleasure. Imagination withholds for the present the scaffold and the axe which await him on to-morrow, and is presenting to his contemplation some cheering prospect. Is it the hope of pardon? or the prospect of rescue? No! no! he is too certain of the fulfilment of his awful sentence, and is of an order of intellect altogether too lofty to suffer himself to be amused with such groundless suggestions. Imagination has been with him during the greater part of his imprisonment of many years continuance, among the busy throng who in past ages peopled the world; and he has recorded their deeds in that ponderous volume you see before him. He is just completing his task, with the termination of his life, and is feeding his fancy with the approbation of the millions, who, through succeeding ages, will look upon the monument he thinks he is now erecting to his name:

Exegi monumentum ære perennius,
Regalique situ pyramidum altius.

Full of thoughts like these, he is not only contented, but his bosom is swelling with immortal happiness.

See that happy pair hanging above the cradle of a sleeping infant. There is indescribable tenderness in their melting countenances, as they alternately glance from the face of the babe towards each other, and both their hearts are

brimful of interesting thoughts which find no utterance.—The child is the first offspring of their mutual love, and fancy is filling their souls with delicious dreams of his future destiny, too bright and extravagant for expression even to each other. Behold yon youth reclining in solitude by the murmuring brook; there is a sadness in his countenance, and were we to judge by its expression, we should say his heart was sorrowful. But the conclusion would be erroneous. He is building aerial castles, revelling in anticipated wealth, and blushing honors are crowding thick upon him—a being beautiful as Heaven is mingling in his dreams, and in a voice sweeter than music's softest note, is uttering to him words of kindness. He is one of Fancy's happiest slaves. Poor boy ! let him dream on this sweetest dream of life. Blessed are they on whom it still is waiting ! Here is a farmer following his plough, whistling as he moves along. The day is hot. He has been long at his toil, and the sun is pouring down upon him its culminating beams ; the perspiration trickles from his brow, and, but for the notes of cheerfulness he is uttering, we might well suppose him spent with fatigue. Yet he is altogether unconscious of the toil he is undergoing. Imagination has lured him forward to the time, when seed time shall have passed away, followed by harvest, and he is counting the gains his crop has brought him ; he hath already dealt out from its product to his fond wife and their smiling progeny appropriate presents, and is luxuriating in sympathy with the pleasure afforded them. But yonder is a solitary sail upon the sleepless ocean ; it is far in the night, and the moon is shedding down upon her its gentle beams. One might almost fancy her a moving coffin ; for not a human voice is heard to break the stillness. Stay—there is one lonely being on the deck ; it is the helmsman at his wheel. There is another quiet figure reclining upon the quarter ; his head is resting on his hand, and his pensive attitude bespeaks him the victim of distressing

thoughts. It is a delusion ; he is a merchant, whom the hope of gain has lured from his home ; his bark is cleaving her way to a foreign land, and he is far from the objects of his love. But he knows not now that he is lying alone upon that deck, that his hair is damp with the dew, and his pale brow reflecting the moon-beam—he hears not the night's wind piping among the shrouds. In fancy, his voyage has been accomplished, and he is once more by his own fire side, among happy hearts and joyful countenances, indulging in the traveller's privileged luxury “telling of antres vast and deserts idle.” There lies a human creature gashed with wounds. His garments are covered with clotted gore. His glazed eyes are turned, as if still striving to pierce the mist that has settled upon them. His hand grasps a sword “upon whose blade and dudgeon are goutts of blood.” Before him and around him, still as himself, the slain are scattered like sheafs of grain from the hand of the reaper. Surely this man must have died in agony, and nothing was found upon this bloody plain, to soothe him in his expiring moments. Again, are we deceived.—He was the Hero of this field, and heard, as he fell, the shout—they fly ! they fly ! Who fly ? was the question, into which was thrown all the remaining energy of his waning voice. “The enemies of your country” was the grateful answer. Fancy placed upon his brow the victorious wreath, she waved proudly before him the flag of his country, and the last throb of his heart was a throb of triumph. See that blind old man sitting in solitude—he has none to share with him the sympathies of life, he tastes not the dainties of the table, and that sense, which brings to other men so much comfort and pleasure, he never possessed, or has long since lost. Surely, for him, life has no charms, and he sighs continually for the repose of the tomb. Far from it. He inhabits worlds of his own creation, and can vary for them at pleasure, attractions far more captivating than any known to the world of ordina-

ry mortals. He peoples them with the renowned and worthy of all generations. It is his to pour the tide of immortal verse, and he lives to be remembered when the wave of oblivion shall have gathered over race after race of the people of the earth. Such were the destinies of Homer and of Milton :

“Thee I revisit safe

And feel thy sov’ran vital lamp ; but thou,
Revisit’s not these eyes ; they roll in vain
To meet thy piercing ray and find no dawn,
So thick a deep serene hath quench’d their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil’d. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,
Smit with the love of sacred song.”

We might thus multiply, without limit, the pictures of persons deriving from their own Imagination not only consolation but enjoyment, and some of them under the most untoward circumstances. But our time is exhausting.—The Imaginations of men have however not only been useful to others in conducing to their physical comfort, as we have already seen, but have also imparted to them the most exquisite intellectual enjoyments. The verse of Homer has delighted nearly all mankind, for almost 3000 years, and in every age, genius has vainly striven with a power, equal to his, to sound the trumpet of Calliope. The bard of Mantua has charmed with the sweetness and richness of his song for nearly two-thirds of that period ; and Tasso and Dante have in more modern times, shewn the love of the Muses for their Italian haunts. But in other portions of favored Europe, the sacred Nine have deigned to appear. Germany has her Heider, her Wieland, her Schiller and her Goethe, while Britain has made us her debtor, for Chaucer, for Spenser, for Shakespear, for Milton, for Dryden, for Pope, for Thompson, for Akenside, for Cowper, for Burns, for Scott, for Byron, for Moore, for a fair Hemans, and a host of others, whom time would fail us to

enumerate. Our own America can as yet boast of but little in the *dulce* of Imagination, having chiefly devoted herself, as her necessities required, to the *utile*; she may yet speak of the modest pretensions of her Barlow, of her Percival, her Halleck, her Willis and her Sigourney. All these have controlled Imagination by the regulation of numbers, but others, and some even among those I have already mentioned, have given to her a freer flight, and been repaid in equal returns from her rich domain. France has given us a Corneille, a Le Sage, a Rousseau and a Fenelon; Spain her renowned Miguel Cervantes; Germany, her Gesner, her Zimmerman and her Klopstock; and Britain her Addison, her Steele, her Johnson, her Fielding, her Smollett, her Richardson, her Bulwer, her Marryatt, and here again must be mentioned the name of Scott, before whom, all others must veil their heads, to whatsoever age or clime they may belong. He shares with Shakespear the wizard wand, in the charmed regions of moral fiction. In this department, the Muse has less reason to be diffident of her performances in our own land, and may point with pride to Brown, to Irvine, to Paulding, to Kennedy, to Simms, to Cooper, and to others.

But, as a moral being, the dominion of Imagination over man, assumes more importance. If she does not form, she at least keeps bright and preserves from rupture the golden links by which society is held together. What beauty does she not impart to the relationships of life?—Ever stirring with her wand the fountains of the affections, she keeps their streams open, and causes them to flow in continual freshness. Truly may it be said, our happiness, or misery in this life depend more upon the state of our own hearts, than upon any extraneous circumstance whatsoever. But it is seldom, as this life is concerned, that the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are in such immediate attendance, as to make their connection palpable to the careless observer. Unless then, Imagination

were to anticipate the flowers which bloom along the path of virtue, and point to us the thorns thickly strewed upon the broad road of vice, we should wander like the blind, unconscious whither we were going, and consequently, regardless of the way we were treading. Let us consider a youth coming into life, beset with all the temptations incident to that interesting but dangerous period of existence. Eros urges, and Erato lures him with her bewitching fascinations, and were he to regard alone the impulses of nature, he would certainly plunge headlong into destructive vices. But faithful Imagination points to the frowning or averted countenances of parents and friends; to the spectacle of some hapless victim, dragging out a wretched existence covered with unseemly scars—diseased and mutilated—loathsome to himself and scorned of others—to the crushed and bleeding heart of ruined innocence—to her pallid countenance—her tearful eye, and her dishevelled locks; and bids him listen to accents of despair, which startle conscience from her guilty slumbers. The wine giveth its colour in the cup, and dissolute companions urge him to slake a preternatural thirst, created by former indulgences. But Imagination shews him the wreathed serpent in the bowl; she points sorrowfully and scornfully to Reason, the boast of his nature, cast from his throne and wallowing like the brute amid filth and vomit. She reminds him of a ruined estate, and a constitution destroyed, reputation lost, and in the prospective a heart broken wife, and a beggared offspring. She points to a black catalogue of crime headed by intemperance, and then to the prison and the gallows. The card table is spread before him, and he hears the enchanting rattle of the dice box, and as quick as the lightning's flash, Imagination presents him with that train of frightful consequences to which they are associated—wasted time—ruined fortune—blasted reputation—exhausted health—tortured family—insanity, and suicide. But if, heedless of her warning portraitures,

youth having passed through scenes of vice, arrives with manhood at the regions of crime, yet mindful of her beneficent office, she is ever representing to him the dangers which environ them, and the engines of ruin and destruction interspersed throughout them. She causes the prison key to grate upon his ear—the fingers of the hangman are about his neck, and, in fancy, he dies a felon's death, beneath the shameful gallows, and hangs there, a warning of horror to every passer by.

But the story is scarcely begun, of the debt of mankind to the faculty of Imagination. As yet, we have considered man as a being bound to this earth, with not one hope or fear soaring beyond it. But Imagination spurns such inglorious rest, such a poor limitation to her range as this wide earth and even her starry canopy can furnish. Not a being of all those to whom belong the *erectos ad sidera vultus*, to whose bosom she has not come with bright images from another world, and invited him to mount with her in a noble search after higher destinies. Ages were spent by her in earnest but fruitless endeavors to pierce the mysterious veil suspended between the material and the spiritual world, and like the Peri in Moore's beautiful Poem, she anxiously sought the price of admission to the glories of Paradise. In her efforts, she peopled Olympus with the Gods, and Helicon with the Muses. She breathed upon Egypt, and her river teemed with Divinities, and her fruitful plains brought them forth more abundant than her harvests. She looked upon the sun, the moon, and the stars, and they heaved into life, and the children of Chaldea kissed their hands in devotion before them. In mischievous zeal, she taught man to deify the passions of his own heart, and make to them images of wood, and of stone, and of brass, and of gold, and these she exclaimed, "be thy Gods oh Israel." But the angel of the Apocalypse was sent in pity to teach her the way to Heaven, and guide her into the knowledge of the true God. Since then, she is continually ascen-

ding thither and returning with new fire to warm the hearts of the pious, and visions of glory to cheer them, which could never be gathered from the fairest regions of this lower world. By this assistance, she carries us back as we listen to the inspired Moses, to the beginning, when the earth we inhabit was a shapeless mass, over which darkness brooded with eternal wing. A Spirit, whose perfections defy even Imagination to conceive, or the tongues of Angels to express, moved in majesty over the formless pile, and light sprang up, and the traces of his own matchless beauty were every where instantly to be seen. The huge mass assumed the curvilinear form; here, a mountain rose in grandeur, and there, a valley slept in everlasting verdure; here, sparkled the restless waters, and there, the stable land was fixed, over which they should never pass. The flocks, the herds, the wild beasts, and the creeping things moved upon the ground, and fishes innumerable, and the monsters of the deep played among its waters; the fowl, with their gorgeous dyes, and the painted butterfly, and countless insects cleft in joy the balmy air. Last of all, in the loveliest spot of the new-formed Earth, appeared a being, more largely endowed than all things else from the beauty and perfections of the mighty Spirit, whose presence had wrought these wonderful works. Before him, the lion cowered in submission, and the tiger licked his feet with affection; all animated creatures moved at his nod, and the spontaneous productions of the vegetable kingdom poured themselves into his lap; and the beneficent Spirit, from whose power he had sprung, condescended to converse with him as a fellow, for in him was his own image faintly shadowed forth. But the perfections of this mighty Spirit, and all the wonders by which he had surrounded him, failed to content this lord of the creation; the former was too lofty for his sympathies, and the latter were wanting in his own immortality; and care came upon him, and, amid wealth and splendour and power, and the presence of his Creator, he

was sad. "It is not good for man to be alone," said the merciful Spirit, "I will make an help meet for him."—Discontent sate heavy on his soul, and the Image of his Maker slept. With mysterious power, the Spirit bent over him, and near the heart of the sleeper, separated the skin and the flesh, and gently removed one of the ribs which had given strength to his immortal frame. Under his magic touch, the chasm closed, and the bloody rib was instantly transformed to a beautiful being, strongly resembling him who still slept on, unconscious of pain, or that any thing had been taken from his former proportions. Less majestic than himself, with a countenance of less vigor, and a brow of less expanse, the new creature was more delicate in her proportions, bore in her countenance more of dove-like innocence and angelic sweetness, than he from whose side she had come forth, while her tresses, far more luxuriant than his, descended to the ground in flowing ringlets. These were the progenitors of the human race, on whom one single law of mercy was imposed. Imagination follows them through their brief hours of bliss, their temptation, their fall, and the prophecies of their recovery, strewed along the path of ages. She marks the incidents in the great plan of salvation, among which she lingers with delight, weaving her garlands around the humble bed of the incarnate God, and listening with rapture to the angelic choir heralding his birth, she follows him through his sufferings and his trials, until he dies upon the cross, and is laid to repose in the garden of Gethsemane. She bursts with him, in triumph, the rocky tomb, and mounts with exulting wing to the throne of his glory. From time to time, she seizes on some incident in this celestial drama, and appeals with it to the heart of some mortal, whose endless destiny, by the most astonishing fatuity, has faded from his notice; and, touching in his bosom some one of those secret chords at whose motion all others vibrate, awakens his dormant faculties, and by a series of associa-

tions, produces that magic change, which He, who best knew, has pronounced as incomprehensible as the goings of the winds.

Such is Imagination, when her flights are directed by kind and holy impulses ; but, unhappily, she is sometimes set on fire of hell, and becomes the destroyer of the physical, the intellectual, the temporal, and the eternal prospects of man. She sets him upon wild and visionary plans in the business of life, on which success, by the eternal laws of nature, is forbidden to smile ; and consequently, blighted hopes make sad the heart, and hunger and thirst become the lot of the homeless wanderer, whose famishing wife and children are calling upon him for the bread he cannot command for his own necessities. Sometimes, instead of gathering honey, like the bee, from the flowers which bloom in the garden of life—like the spider, she sucks from them nothing but venom, poisoning her own intellectual health and that of others. Often does she turn from the beneficent office of causing vice and crime to cast before them those shadows of evil which ever attend them, and forming with them a dangerous league, throws around them, for the time, her most seductive enchantments. Erato comes forth with the rose and the myrtle encircling her brow, and the lyre and the lute banish all thoughts but those of the passion they inspire. The ruby of the bowl acquires a dazzling brightness, and the clusters of the vine, with its broad and luxuriant foliage, hide from the view the spirits of evil who follow the footsteps of Bacchus. The fascinations of the gaming table acquire irresistible force, and the votary of fortune is blinded to the dangers which beset him. She stimulates the passions which prompt to crime, and treacherously indicates some method of escaping its punishment. She arrays Superstition in the garb of Religion, and gathers around her, deluded followers, who offer upon her altars the fruit of their own bodies, or tender senseless homage to stocks and stones or the starry host ; or, in more natu-

ral delusion, make idols of their own appetites, and dream of an eternity of sensual enjoyment, exquisite in proportion to their desperate devotion in this present world.

Since such is the influence of Imagination over the destinies of man, how inexpressibly important that it should be happily exerted—that it should, as Providence designed, be ever ready to supply to Reason, a strong and steady light, instead of betraying him into error by a feeble flickering flame, or deluding him by sudden, irregular, bright and evanescent flashes. This is the great purpose of your collegiate course; it is for this the public has provided these extensive means and appliances for learning—that parents and friends have at expence and sacrifice, subjected you to this discipline. But your own co-operation is indispensably necessary. Indeed, a wish properly to regulate your own Imagination, is the only thing which can afford the least hope of success. She will be ready enough to suggest to you, that she needs no regulation, that she is already all that she should be, and inhabits the bosom of one gifted with every human perfection. But listen not to this flattering falsehood. Consider yourself on the contrary, as you really are, in the very embryo of existence, with faculties for illimitable improvement, and be sure that but little progress has been made, until you begin to be troubled with fears, that time has been wasted, and improvement neglected. It is not so much the actual amount of matter you will here lay up in the store house of Memory, that renders your present scene of life of so much importance; it is the exercise given to your intellectual powers, and chiefly, as most efficient in themselves, to the Reason and Imagination. The faculties of our minds are greatly under the dominion of habit, and the most important office of education is to form for them healthful habits; to exercise them in those fields where their power is hereafter to be effectually exerted. Over none of our faculties does habit exert a more powerful sway, than over the Imagina-

tion. It is said of the great Captain of ancient times, Phyrus of Epirus, that having been brought up in camps, his Imagination was delighted with nothing but the pomp and circumstance of war—embattled legions—the clash of arms, and the shouts of victory. It was for this reason that Hamilcar, the father of the renowned Hanibal of Carthage, took him at nine years of age, to swear upon the altars of the Gods eternal hatred against the Romans; that his Imagination, strongly impressed by the occasion, might habitually engage herself in the fabrication of schemes, for the overthrow of those lawless conquerors. But the power of habit over the Imagination, is fully vindicated by the doctrine of association, to which we have already had occasion slightly to refer: and may be most strikingly exemplified in cases where the reason enfeebled, or destroyed, no longer exerts her wonted control. When the late Chief Justice of England was on the bed of death, the stern reality that it was a closing scene, impressed itself upon his mind, and, obedient to habit, Imagination immediately arrayed before him an important forensic trial, to which nothing remained but the last act, the veteran Judge was wont to perform. His hand moved as if making the accustomed memorandum: “Gentlemen of the Jury,” he said in expiring accents, “you may retire,” and in another moment, the learned Tenterden was no more. The man in whom Reason and Imagination were so happily blended, that to him has been conceded the intellectual supremacy of the age, in the dying exclamation *tete de annee*, gave incontestible evidence, if any had been wanting, to the nature of the visions with which his Imagination was wont to amuse him. How does the experience of every one bear witness to himself, that his Imagination has her habitual haunts and objects, towards which she directs herself on every excitement? Some plan of life—some threatened evil—some promised good—some beloved relative—or, the tomb of a departed friend. Let then the habits of

your Imagination, be such as will contribute to your usefulness, and your own happiness. Exercise her in those regions, where it is altogether important her future flights should chiefly be taken—in sober reflection, in the contemplation of those subjects which concern alike all conditions of life, which belong equally to all rational and accountable beings. Many wise men have recommended what, I conceive, Reason does not disapprove—the habit of writing down your own reflections. It affords a better opportunity of closely observing, and therefore of correcting or encouraging the tendencies of your fancy. It supplies you with a treasury, in addition to your own memory, and one less apt to let slip the things committed to it, on which you may draw in future, either for composition or other uses. The habit of composition will thus be formed—a thing altogether essential to the formation of a good writer, and the earlier it is commenced, the more likely to be successful :

True grace in writing comes by art, not chance;
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

But watch, anxiously watch, the propensity Imagination has already exhibited to throw her gorgeous drapery around the person of vice, and thus render her acceptable to your own bosom :

Vice is a monster of such horrid mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen.

But accommodating fancy is ever ready to furnish her with a mask so beautified by her plastic hand, that even a sage might mistake her for an angel of light. The surer method of escaping this ruinous delusion, is to keep your eye steadily upon this active quality of your nature, so active as to delight in mischief rather than idleness, and give her employment where her labors will be useful, or at the worst, innocent. She has no particular love for vice, but she will not be idle, and you have only to give her employment in the cause of virtue, to find her as ready

to heighten the native charms of the one, and expose the deformities of her rival, as, if accidentally caught by vice without employment, she would be to deck her off in borrowed graces, and to mask the beauties of virtue. This is but another mode of setting forth the oft repeated warning against the dangers of idleness. It is a common mistake, that in crowds only, amid the bustle or gaieties of life, are our Imaginations thus prone to palter with us.—Never are we in so much danger as when in solitude; all physical objects being shut out from one to another, of which she may flit with restless wing, nothing is left to her but to sport with what she may find within the little world of man. The passions are prompt to offer themselves, eager for exercise, either among the substantial objects of sense, or the bright images created by fancy; and in the downright earnestness of their own natures, what Imagination meant only in sport, they soon convert into settled purposes of mischief. Malice sees the object of his hatred, in unconscious slumber, where caution has not barred the door, and instinctively seizes the dagger to plunge into his heart, or the subtle “hebenon to pour into the porches of his ear.” Dishonest avarice is dazzled with the golden hoard lying where, unsuspected, he imagines he can make himself its master. Another passion, like the false Jachimo, enters the chamber of unguarded beauty, and stealthily advances to his purpose. Deep, deep into the soul of him who cherishes them, these guilty pictures sink; and, as he continues to contemplate them, the dread realities they shadow forth, will find their consummation. How fully do the legends of the Romish Church confirm us in this statement! What but strong temptations presented through the Imagination, were the devils who beset St. Dunstan, St. Anthony and others. Healthy employment, constant and persevering, is the antidote to this habit.

There is a proneness in the Imagination, to colour falsely or too highly, the incidents of life, which, if confirmed by

habit, must render its victim the sport of every breeze which ruffles the current of his existence. Some prosperous event occurs—he is instantly intoxicated with delirious joy—the heavens above him are a wide expanse of laughing sunshine, never to be shadowed by the lightest cloud—the earth he treads is paradise regained—the day of death is distant—he himself is richer than the Lydian monarch in his palmiest day of wealth—every man with whom he has dealings is more honest than Aristides, and his blind philanthropy beholds the human race spotless in virtue; in vain confidence, he neglects all those precautions dictated by the most liberal prudence—he becomes extravagant in every thing, and yields himself and his affairs to that fortune of which Scylla boasted, and in which Cæsar trusted. This you may suppose an overwrought picture; but the experience of thousands can testify to its correctness, as well as to the disastrous lot usually befalling those who indulge their Imagination in this dangerous habit. On the other hand, some slight adversity befalls him, and the whole cup of existence is poisoned—the heavens lower with the tempests of destruction ready to burst upon him—the earth yields no increase to supply his future wants—some destroying angel has swept over its beauty, and no comeliness is left—he feels mortal disease creeping through every nerve of his system, and over against him upon every wall, the fingers of a hand are writing his destiny—his silver has become dross, and all his wealth has vanished—his friends have forsaken him, and even the wife of his bosom looks strangely upon him—the moral atmosphere has become a leprous mass—among all his acquaintances, there are none who are honest, no, not one: nothing of the beauty of virtue is left to them—“Man delights him not, nor woman neither;” in perfect desperation he abandons himself and his affairs, to a destiny speedy, gloomy, and irresistible. Controlled by Reason, Imagination would see in the events of life, an overruling Prov-

idence, who directs all things for the general good of his creatures—without whom, not a sparrow falleth to the earth, and by whom, the very hairs of our heads are numbered—she would soar towards him as a beneficent father, whose children we all are, allowed to share in our liberal patrimony, according to our deserts. She would perceive that he is a Being who delighteth to humble the proud, and exalt the humble, that to him alone are we to look for a continuance of prosperity, while no depth of adversity will hide us from his notice, or place us beyond the reach of his deliverance. Let it be the habit of your Imagination, thus comfortably to present the incidents of life to your consideration.

When you reflect that your usefulness in the society of which you are destined to be a member, will mainly depend upon the strength and conduct of your Imagination—that your enjoyment as an intellectual being, and perhaps that of others, will derive their quality and quantity from the same source, that all your moral tendencies will receive their impulses from her breath, and that your destinies through Eternity, will probably be according to the visions she will bring you from the world of spirits, with what zeal and carefulness should you cherish her, while yet a healthful vigor may be imparted ! How anxiously should you watch the tendencies of her flights, and encourage them, if in the direction of usefulness, virtue, happiness, and Heaven ; and vigorously check and control them, if tending towards mischief, sin, sorrow, and eternal ruin. As this faculty is to exert upon yourself and others, most prevailing influence, most needful it is, that she should herself be early brought under proper government. It is the office of Reason to control and direct her flights, without at all impairing her native vigor. It is an error to suppose, that when people are extravagant and visionary in their thoughts, plans and purposes, their Imaginations are too strong. No ! the fault is in their Reason, which

is either feeble by nature, or accustomed to slumber.— Rather let Reason and Imagination both be strong, and seek not to bring them to proper proportions by enfeebling the one, but by strengthening the other. Cherish Imagination, as you would have your minds active and capable of great achievements; but keep her under the control of Reason, and let Reason also be ripe and vigilant. This is with you the season, when this wonderful faculty, the Imagination, is eager for food, and like the Eagle cleaving the air, is ready to pounce upon any quarry; let not her unregulated appetite prey upon garbage, but present to her continually, the most wholesome food. Knowledge is the food of Imagination. Strive then, that your knowledge be of the kind best suited to strengthen her in those employments, in which it is her destiny to be occupied in your future life. So far as it is in your power, control that destiny by choosing a profession, or other employment, conformably to her natural bias, if you are able to discern one having nothing vicious in itself. If your existence upon earth was unlimited in duration, then might you rationally seek to compass all earthly knowledge. But it is not so; human life is but a span long, while in every age, new pages are adding to the book of knowledge. True economy, therefore, demands that you should so gather knowledge, as to acquire the most valuable hoard in the shortest possible time. The experience of those to whom is committed the care of your education, enables them to direct you in this pursuit, and the office of giving these directions, is among the most responsible relationships one human being can bear to another. While, therefore, they are no doubt painfully sensible of the weight of this responsibility, courtesy and self interest combine in dictating on your part, the most respectful and diligent pursuance of the course they may prescribe. Some general remarks, however, may not be unbecoming the present occasion. Experience has approved certain studies, and

recognized them as the proper rudiments of every education. These you have already passed through, and have doubtless become sensible of their inestimable value ; but you cannot be as much so as you would, if suddenly transferred from the gloom of ignorance surrounding so many of your fellow creatures to your present intellectual light. In your progressive course, those general principles of science, necessary or rather highly useful for every man to possess, have been gradually unfolded, but more yet remains to be acquired ; and this, you should assiduously reach after, but, especially, whatever is most likely to be called into requisition in that cast of life, which choice or necessity has assigned you. But exclusive devotion, to what are called the severe studies, could neither be borne by your physical constitution, nor would answer effectually, the great purpose of training your Imagination. For this, what has been called general reading, seems indispensable. By general reading, I understand any reading not confined to a particular subject. At the head of this extensive class, stands History or Biography, sacred and profane. "The proper study of mankind, is man," says an approved and elegant writer, and History spreads out a vast map of human nature, where we may trace all actions to their respective sources. The anatomist, with his dissecting apparatus, does not more successfully lay open the complicated machinery of these wonderful fabricks which constitutes all that is visible of man, than History enables us to unravel the mysteries of the heart, and detect all those secret springs which govern its impulses; while in the paths of History, the Imagination finds inexhaustible stores of usefulness and delight. I come now to a species of reading, about which good men have widely differed, and I therefore venture to speak of it with much hesitation. I mean works of fiction, whether in verse or prose. My own judgment is, that they are susceptible of being made highly useful through the Imagination, both to

the head and heart, but they are certainly liable to great abuses, and should therefore be used with caution. No better rule can probably be laid down in relation to them, than, in your choice of works, to regard the previous condemnation or approval of those, in whose opinions you can confide, while in their perusal, you avoid subtracting from time, rightfully belonging to more important pursuits.— But some portions of your time must be devoted to relaxation, and in giving a part of it to the works of moral fiction, you will enjoy fine intellectual repasts; and be the better prepared, should you possess the ability and inclination, to furnish similar entertainments for others. Yet I cannot forbear to warn you, that few things so effectually dissipate the intellectual powers, and bring upon them premature langour, as an indiscriminate consumption of all that comes from the press, or any approximation to exclusive indulgence in this kind of reading. There are books, of whose utility none can doubt, in which the Imagination will find more delight, than any, save one, which the press can furnish, and of which he, who is ignorant, hath no pretensions to be called a man of wisdom, however deeply he may have plunged into the mystical lore of ancient times, or however assiduously he may have followed the legendary stream to the present day. One of these is the book of nature, that vast volume written in characters so variegated, as to attract the attention of every beholder. But alas! how few so read them as to penetrate much of their important meaning. Little inferior in importance is the book of man.

Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters,

said Lady Macbeth to her agitated husband; and the face, the heart, the conduct of man, all present interesting and instructive lessons to him who has wit to read them. As we have already said, in speaking of history, it presents, as it were, a map of human nature; but as the traveller

acquires a more intimate knowledge of the countries he actually visits than the most accurate geographical representation could afford him, so, as far as experience may be extended in the study of human nature, it surpasses history. But as maps and geographical treatises greatly assist the traveller in acquiring a perfect knowledge of the countries he visits, so is it advantageous that the study of human nature and History or Biography should go hand in hand. The book of nature, including the book of man, constituted in ancient times the only library of the Philosopher, and has furnished most that is valuable in the printed libraries of the present day. But it is yet an exhaustless mine of knowledge, ever yielding and still retaining incalculable moral and intellectual wealth. From hence Imagination draws her most abundant supplies of food, and all the materials for her wonderful creations. Read, then, these books attentively; but above all, read the book of God, which is able to make you wise unto salvation.— Within it, is condensed all that it is indispensable for man to know. It is a copious glossary for the book of nature, and he who knoweth what is in man, hath therein transcribed what few have the acuteness, the firmness, and the honesty to find in the original volume. Believe me, as mere furniture of the mind, for this world's uses, the Bible surpasses every other single volume upon earth. 'Therein the Imagination and all its other powers find appropriate aliment; and if it be true, as has been wittily remarked, that it is dangerous to encounter in debate the man who reads but one book, how vast must be the dialectic power of him whose one book is the Bible? But there must come a time to every one living, when Imagination, clinging to him, although Reason may have deserted, will occupy a place by his feverish couch, and scatter thorns or roses on his pillow—will bring before him visions of bliss or shadows of tormenting horror. And this important alternative is altogether dependant upon the fountain from which she is

wont to draw her supplies during the season of health and strength. The same cause more powerfully affects another alternative, whose importance language is incompetent to express—when Time shall have furled his exhausted pinions, and Hope and Imagination shall have dropt their plumage, and on every thing shall fall one present, unvarying reality of bliss or misery, inconceivable and everlasting.

Having now imperfectly fulfilled my undertaking, at the expence of much more time than I had intended—for which I crave your pardon—I am placed by the faculty of which we have been speaking, at a point of affecting interest. We have met here for an instant, like bubbles floating on some vast expanse, and will soon be borne by capricious currents in different directions, never again to be all collected in one earthly assemblage. Cold must be the heart untouched by this consideration, and that is not moved to leave behind it some token of remembrance.—Volumes of thought rush in upon the soul, and, with undeterred claims for precedence, each denies utterance to another. Imagination loves to contemplate the young—she is an earthly quality, and loves the earth, and delights herself in visions of earthly glory. For the young she can weave the garlands of hope, and open before them long vistas of bright and happy days, and at their termination, can interweave all flowers of earthly beauty, to conceal realities that lie beyond. But for the grey head, she can weave no garland but of gloomy cypress. The proximity of the coffin and the grave defy all her powers of enchantment to conceal them; and in despair she returns to nestle in the bosom of the young.

I know that to each one of you she is presenting some object after which your heart is panting, and holds out the appropriate wreath to crown you with success; but whether of the myrtle, the vine leaf, or the laurel, is only known with certainty to yourselves. But spectators look

on in trembling anxiety, lest some unworthy prize should be the object of your pursuit, and injuriously affect your preparation for the race of life. To them, Imagination presents you as so many beings containing within you gems of utility and happiness, or of mischief and misery, boundless as the universe and lasting as eternity, and she is herself confounded in pursuing them to their limitless developements. When we cast our eye upon the simple acorn, and give our fancy wing to the time when it shall strike its roots deep into the earth, and send forth its branches high up to heaven, pleasing wonder is the inevitable attendant. But when we go still farther, and see in it the parent of a forest, which, in its turn, furnishes the germs of other forests, until no space is left to receive them, Imagination, abandoning the tantalizing pursuit, turns to contemplate the destiny of some single tree, and beholds it wasting itself in useless cumbrance of the ground, and sinking into unregretted decay, or else answering some beneficent purpose of utility, and attracting around it the affections of men. Perhaps from the patriot's breast she sees it bearing upon the ocean the snowy canvass, and sending from its bosom the naval thunder against the enemies of his country. We look upon the bubbling fountain, and pursue in Imagination the glad young waters, along their course, to their ocean home. Perhaps they irrigate smiling landscapes, and reflect the homes of happy thousands, and lending their bosom to the nourishment of commerce, contribute to the growth of knowledge and the arts. But perhaps, alas! they steal sluggishly along the barren wastes themselves have poisoned, and scattering pestilence through the air which hangs above them, drive far away the foot of industry, or slay unhappy wretches who, through accident or necessity, venture to approach them. And so, when we look upon the young man in his strength, we see him vegetating in indolence, or scattering moral poison through the atmosphere he breathes, or spreading forth

his branches like a tree planted by a river, increasing in all that can give him utility and comeliness. We consider him as the progenitor of a race whom no man can number, swelling the hosts of heaven or the legions of hell. Imagination recoils in amazement; but Reason recognizes the truth of the picture, and founds on it an appeal, which, while it swells the heart with pride, oppresses it with a sense of tremendous responsibility. But Imagination, following the individual in his course, presents him passing through life as a feverish dream, and when it is over, continuing to sleep, unwept of those whom he leaves behind. But she lays before us a portraiture of still greater horror, and we see him stalking over the earth, a moving pestilence, miserable himself, and marring the happiness of others; trampling beneath his feet all that is lovely and honorable; hating and being hated, until, falling into some pit he had digged for another, he exchanges the gloom of his present existence, through which gleams of hope have occasionally flashed, and over which Imagination has thrown now and then her prismatic radiance, for a state of darkness and misery, horrid, uninterrupted and eternal. And now, Imagination closes with her most glorious vision: She exhibits him in honorable rivalry of Faust, Bacon, Locke, Newton, Washington, Franklin and Fulton, in deeds of usefulness; and of Milton, Shakspeare and Scott, in the beauties of moral fiction. The trophies of his virtuous achievements are in every land, and nations acknowledge him as their benefactor. He is gathered to his fathers in a good old age, and, entering upon a state of more enlarged existence, is crowned by the hand of Everlasting Mercy with wreaths of unfading Amarynth, gathered by Faith and Hope from gardens, whose beauty and fragrance surpass the highest stretch of Imagination.





